

Jan Tusick- Director
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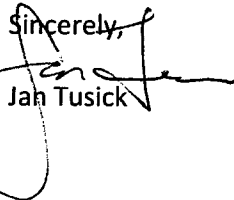
House Agriculture Committee
RE: Support HB 478

Dear Chairman Redfield and Committee Members,

My name is Jan Tusick and I am testifying on behalf of the Grow Montana Coalition and the Food and Agriculture Development Center Program. Before I begin I would like to personally thank Representative Williams for her dedication and hard work last session which resulted in HB 630. I participated as an advisory member to the committee that took on the hard work in reviewing our state food regulations. The end result is HB 478 and I believe this bill truly reflects the public review and work the committee undertook.

As the director of the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, one of the four Food and Agriculture Development Centers, I can speak directly to the challenges food business face in their development. I believe the Cottage Food Act truly removes barriers and creates new opportunities to emerging food businesses. Cottage Food businesses are grassroots food entrepreneurship that, under this act, have the opportunity to explore and develop markets for their food products. How many of you know people who have been supported by their family and friends to put that great recipe they have into a jar or bag and sell it. I know many. I admire businesses such as Stellas Café, Black Cat Bakery, and Mrs. Wonderful that had small beginnings from their home kitchens and now are main street businesses. But I have saved the best story for last. Becky's Berries had humble beginnings and is now a business with national sales. She is a great example of how HB 478 can provide opportunities for new businesses but can also help her continue in her growth by addressing the temporary license cost. I hope you have time to read her story (handout included) and enjoy her product.

In closing HB 478 is a common sense bill and is one to quickly move to passage in this session. I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jan Tusick